

Alton branch of NAACP holds 49th Freedom Fund dinner, Argosy helps recognize students

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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SEE NAACP Freedom Fund dinner video below:

ALTON - Each year, the Alton branch of the NAACP Freedom Fund dinner serves as a major fundraiser to support the organization's youth programs.

For years, there have been many sponsors of the banquet, but one who has partnered year in and year out has been Argosy with youth scholarships. This year's 49th annual banquet was held this past Saturday night at the Atrium in Alton.

"It was great that Lynne Marburger of Argosy attended the dinner and assisted with the scholarship presentation," NAACP Alton branch President Andy Hightower said. "The Alton Branch NAACP is appreciative of Argosy's commitment to partner with us as we continue to have a positive impact on the youth in our community. The Freedom Fund dinner is the major fundraiser to support our youth programs. It's always good when the community comes together in support of our youth. There were approximately 300 people in attendance."

The two scholarship winners at the event were Kiera Harrdmon and Shantal Terrell.

"It was impressive to hear how well spoken Kiera Hardmon and Shantal Terrell were during the scholarship presentation," Hightower said. "Alonzo Johnson did an outstanding job in his appeal for the community to become members of the Alton Branch NAACP."

Teresa Hailey, the Illinois state NAACP president, said one of the main topics of conversation for the organization statewide now range from health care, criminal justice reform, education, economic development and environmental justice.

"We are talking about housing and jobs and any issue that has impact and affects all communities, especially the minority community," she said. "It takes a village to raise a child and as a community and organization we have to do more in times like these."

Hailey stressed that it is important to have "Unity in Times Like These," the theme of this year's Alton branch of the NAACP banquet.

Hailey spent years involved with the American Red Cross and working disasters. She said that has helped her in her role as statewide NAACP president.

“The NAACP is there to help anyone, regardless of race, creed, socio-economic background and religion,” she said. “We are there to help provide overall assistance in our communities and empower and give people necessary tools to be successful.”

Hightower said one of the key things he is trying to achieve is to bring the community together and get people working toward a common goal.

“Ms. Teresa Haley, State NAACP President, delivered a remarkable message as she stressed the importance of having “Unity in Times Like These.”

“We will continue to work with her on issues that impact communities throughout the state,” Hightower said of Haley.